(d) if so, in what manner?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) and (b) Government seek to establish a relationship of trust, friendship and cooperation with Pakistan. Government are aware of the view that increased people-to-people interaction would promote goodwill between the two countries. Government are, therefore, following a policy of encouraging people-to-people contacts and promoting greater interaction among scholars, intellectuals, journalists, writers, artistes, businessmen and others. Government have unilaterally eased the issuance of visas to Pakistani nationals. As a consequence, there has been a substantial increase in the number of visas issued to Pakistani nationals.

(c) and (d) While Pakistan in bilateral discussions has given firm indications that it is easing its visa regime for Indian nationals, Government are not aware of any steps taken by Pakistan in this regard.

Missile Race between India and Pakistan

948. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item published in the Hindustan Times dated the 8th July, 1997 captioned "India-Pak must halt missile race, analysts";

(b) whether it is a fact that with the missile race hotting up with the recent test firing of the Half III missile by Pakistan, the possibility of its use in the conventional mode cannot be ruled out; and

(c) if so, whether Government propose to include this issue in the agenda of confidence-building measures for the next round of Foreign Secretary level talks between India and Pakistan?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. India has taken note of the Pakistani missile programme and its impact on the region's security. Government closely monitor all developments relating to it and have taken all necessary steps to safeguard the country's security in accordance with our threat perceptions.

(c) The dialogue with Pakistan has been resumed at the Foreign Secretary level and, following the last round of discussions in Islamabad, a Joint Statement was issued which envisages discussions on "peace and security" issues. The substance and the modalities of these discussions will be elaborated at the next round of Foreign Secretary level talks.

Pakistan's complaint about Deployment of Prithvi

949. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report published in "Washington Post" (USA) in the first week of June, 1997 regarding Pakistan's complaint about India's deployment of Ballistic Missile "Prithvi" near Indo-Pak Border, as well as to the news item captioned "Pakistan warns of steps against Prithvi Missile", appearing in the Times of India of the 6th June, 1997;

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government and of the US Secretary of state to these reports; and

(c) whether Government of India have clarified the real position to both the Government of Pakistan and to US Secretary of state?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government have issued a Press Statement in this regard on 14 June, 1997 categorically stating that Prithvi missiles have not been deployed.

Response to India's Suggestion to Upgrade Military Might

950. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question

4283 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 15th May, 1997 and state:

(a) the response received to India's suggestion in the NAM Ministerial Conference held in New Delhi, to upgrade military might by the Third World; and

(b) the outcome of sittings in regard to proposed UN reform to secure voice for the 113 members of the Movement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA): (a) No Such suggestion was made by India at the Xllth NAM Ministerial Conference at New Delhi.

(b) The Foreign Ministers adopted a Declaration on the expansion of the Security Council which opposed partial or selective expansion of the Security Council to the detriment of developing countries. They also called for under-represen-tation of NAM countries to be corrected by enlargement of the Secrurity Council. The UN reforms are under discussion in the United Nations. The NAM foreign Ministers will review developments on the issue of security Council reforms at their next annual meeting in September 1997 during the 52nd session of the UN General Assembly in New York.

Indians Arrested by Myanmar Army

951. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 2618 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 19th March, 1997 and state:

(a) whether Shri Sarangthem Yaima, alias Gandhi Singh, an inhabitant of Manipur who had been arrested by the Myanmar Army in Tumu side of Myanmar, is still alive;

(b) the number of Indians still in the Myanmar jails;

(c) the steps taken by the Government to save their lives; and

(d) the number of persons arrested by the Myanmar army from the Manipur border recently?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA): (a) On receipt of information in October 1996 that one Shri Chabungban Salang, bearing the alias "Gandhi Singh", along with one Shri Zukhamo alias Khyaothun-go had been arrested by Myanmar authorities and lodged in the Mandalay Jail, the Embassy of India in Yangon had sought consular access to them. However, the Myanmar authorities have conveyed that no such persons were lodged in Mandalay jail. More concrete information on these two Indian nationals had since been conveyed to Myanmar authorities, most recently in June, 1997. Government have no information on any other person bearing the same alias who is under detention in Myanmar.

(b) 55 Indian citizens are presently detained in Myanmar jails. Consular access to all-Indian detainees has been sought by our Embassy in Yangoon Myanmar.

(c) Government are in regular touch with concerned authorities in Myanmar on the issue of Indian nationals under detention in Mytanmar jails.

(d) No reports have been received of persons arrested by the Myanmar Army from the Manipur border recently.

US Warning against deployment of Missiles by India

952. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Govern ment have deployed medium range ballis tic missiles near Indo-Pak border and that US Government has warned against their deployment; and

(b) if so, what is the factual position?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) and (b) Government have issued a press statement in this regard on 14 June, 1997 categorically stating that Prithvi missiles have not been deployed.